

TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY



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Area Code Relief Necessary for (901); TRA to Receive Public Comment

NASHVILLE – The North American Numbering Plan Administration (NANPA) has advised the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) that in early 2002, the (901) area code will exhaust.

Area code exhaust occurs when nearly all of the “NXX” codes (also called telephone number prefixes) in a given area code have been assigned to telephone companies.

To prepare for the 2002 exhaust date, the TRA will be asking Tennessee consumers in the affected areas for suggestions on addressing the issue.

Says TRA Consumer Services Chief, Eddie Roberson, “The 901 area code is in jeopardy of running out of telephone number prefixes if action is not soon taken to provide relief. And because of this, we are very much interested in receiving feedback from consumers in the affected areas on possible solutions.”

To make this feedback possible, the TRA will be hosting a series of public meetings throughout the (901) region for the purpose of receiving comments on the proposed area code relief solutions.

“We want to give everyone, consumers and businesses alike, ample time to have their questions answered well before a change takes place. Consumer input on this issue is critical,” adds Roberson.

There are two primary factors that contribute to area code exhaust: The entry of new telecommunications providers who request a large number of NXX codes, and the way telephone numbers are assigned by NANPA.

The solutions for addressing a region's area code problem have, traditionally, taken the form of either a **“geographic split”** or an area **“overlay.”**

A **geographic split** involves assigning a new area code to one portion of the households in the exhausted area, while leaving the remaining area with the existing area code. Under this option, 7-digit local dialing would remain *within* the respective area codes; but 10-digit dialing would be necessary for calling *between* the old and new area codes.

An area **overlay** involves superimposing a new area code over the existing (901) code. Under this option, 10-digit local dialing would be required for *all* local calls made throughout the area covered by the new code. Every household under an overlay plan would be required to dial 10-digits when making local calls.

The area code public meeting locations, along with the times and dates, will be announced in the coming weeks.

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